TURN LEFT IN ORDER TO GO RIGHT

NORMAN FISCHER
A NOTE ON THE TITLE

Occasionally when people ask me about Zen practice I say it's not the usual kind of activity in that you can't really try to do it. If you try to move toward it it always seems to be somewhere else. The harder you try the worse it gets. But you can't not make any effort either; in fact you have to make a mighty effort, but in another direction. It's a little like turning left in order to go right.

N.E.
Green Gulch Zen Temple
Muir Beach, CA, July, 1987
I'D LIKE TO SEE IT

A compendium of words was stored here
Just underneath the chimney
I'd like to see it that way
Fortune won't stand still for that
And pressure of the air flattens paper
I'd like to see it that way
One comes into the room groomed, a pleasure
There's a patch of glitter in the glamor
I'd like to see it that way
Each moment opens up sudden as an umbrella
On a day storms gather like wool
A way I'd really like to see it
So you can't assume a face again
Before the non-face puts in its appearance
Nor can you push at the door expecting satisfaction on the other side
I'd like to see it that way
Many's the time and time for reflection
Truer than truth the subject's interconnections
I'd like to see it that way
I was born on a day absolutely unique in world history
Birds grasp their path in air
I'd like to see it that way
It's standard to pack half a dozen at a clip
Imagine the red thing yours alone at last
I'd like to see it that way
The image almost takes shape superimposed
As a mist on top of ordinary daily objects
I'd like to see it that way

Life goes on forever like a dusty road
Down which we peer as we drink a glass of water
I'd like to see it that way
We return again and again born into wombs
The shape of inverted ice cream cones
I'd like to see it that way
So I could relax, put on my enormous suit
And ring your doorbell holding my breath and flowers
I'd like to see it that way
In order to be able to end war but
Would war ever end or would my wanting
To end it ever end if nothing ever ended
I'd like to see it that way
Everything is standing up and falling down again
Constantly like hair in wind
I'd like to see it that way
For the good of the nation behind bars
For my own good bundled up into piles
I'd like to see it that way
I blow continuously on this thing the landscape
Crumple around me like a felt hat
I'd like to see it that way
But the problem is I put out my hand
And only clutch air wanting to understand
I'd like to see it some way
Any way so long as I could know it was there
And could pull back the covers at will
To reveal my heart's desire and measure it
I'd like to see it that way